(e) The export promotion council have so far taken two 3-member delegation of human hairs to Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan and U.S.A.

Relief to plantation crop growers

1090. SHRl JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to create a special corpus of Rs. 500 crores to provide relief to the plantation crop growers in times of depressed market conditions;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) the details of the loss suffered by coffee, tea, coconut, arecanut and rubber growers in various parts of the country on account of declining prices of their respective products or unfavourable climatic conditions and relief provided to the growers during the last three years, crop-wise and year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRl RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) and (b) Government has approved the setting up of a Price Stabilisation Fund with a corpus of Rs. 500 crore to provide relief to the growers of tea, coffee, rubber and tobacco in the times of depressed prices.

(c) There has been a decline in the prices of coffee, tea, coconut, arecanut and rubber and the growers of these commodities are not getting the same price as they were getting few years back. The decline in the prices has adversely affected the income of the growers making plantations unviable.

To provide relief to the growers of these commodities Government has taken a series of steps enumerated below;—

Coffee: Concerned with the problems of the coffee growers, Government (Banks) has rephased loans availed by the coffee growers, provided interest relief of 5% and 3% to small growers and large growers respectively on the working capital loans taken by them from financial institutions and provided financial assistance @ 50 paisa per kg to the exporters for reducing the handling cost etc.

Tea

Government implemented a Price Subsidy scheme to provide relief to the small growers of tea, reduced the excise duty on tea, increased the import duty on tea, restructed/rescheduled the loans outstanding in the tea sector from commercial banks, provided financial incentives to exporters, introduced the Tea Marketing Control Order, 2003 for greater tfansparency in the price discovery mechanism for tea etc.

Coconut

In order to ensure remunerative prices to coconut farmers for their produce. Govt, of India fixes Minimum Support Price (MSP) every year for milling copra and ball copra and undertakes price support operations if the price falls below MSP. The Coconut Development Board also encourages diversification of coconut products and value added products and its market promotion activities to stabilise the declining trend in the price of coconut.

Arecanut

For helping-arecanut farmers to get remunerative prices for their produce, Govt, of India implemented a Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) in Goa, Andaman and Nicobar islands and Karnataka.

Rubber

To safeguard the interest of the growers of rubber, Government has taken a number of measures which include market intervention operation through STC during 1997 to 2001, fixing and notifying the minimum price of rubber, continuing the ban on import of Natural Rubber even in the Quantitative Restrictions free regime and curbing surge in imports of Natural Rubber by enforcing quality standards formulated by Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) on imported rubber also and restricting import of Natural Rubber through two ports viz. Vishakhapatnam and Kolkata only.

Package to attract MNCs for Investment in NER

1091. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Govemment have prepared any new package under new